Movement lesson

Angela 2 — Week 4, Day 2, Session 5 — 44 minutes

Summary: On the front, the lesson explores letting movement and weight pass through the body into the ground and the space around it. Rolling the pelvis, bending the legs, and letting the eyes lead a look over the shoulder soften the chest and connect the whole self, then the sensing continues into standing.

Letting it go through

[Russell:] So let's come to our mats.

Let's leave it open. I think we'll keep the air moving.

Sure.

Just resting there, take off your glasses.

So, one of the esoteric secrets of letting things go through your body is to let them go through your body.

So what does that mean? It means that the ground can take weight.

And when we have the ground in challenging circumstances, it helps to go through the body. And also, when we connect to the space around our body, we grow out. We worked with so much last time, going into that space around the body, and then even to extend way out and turn the light around.

That all is so helpful for not solidifying, which is the key here — how we solidify.

So let's do some movement to help us connect to the ground and move through.

Come onto your front, please. Find a way onto your front.

Being on your front is challenging, and having some pillows or some other supports — use what you need.

And just begin by sensing the front of yourself and the earth in relationship.

So different than thinking, I'm lying on the floor and this is hard on this or that. That your whole body, and particularly the front of you, are lying on a body. And this body that you're lying on, you have relationship with it.

Even though the earth is a few floors below, you're still — the forces working through you, pulling you towards the center of the earth, are here.

Whether you're lying in a grassy field in the desert, or you're lying on the 50th floor of a high rise, the earth forces are pulling you.

You can sense something about that.

Rolling the pelvis

Just very lightly lift one side of your pelvis. Let your pelvis lift a little bit, let the leg roll, the knee give a little bit, and then come back to neutral, and then let the other side lift.

So it's somewhat analogous to the movement on our back, of turning the pelvis one way and the other and listening to the influence through the legs.

And just start with a very light rolling, listening to the movement up and down. The legs are long as you're turning your pelvis.

The knee might bend a little bit out to the side, as the heel comes towards the floor.

And then at some point, change the orientation of your head, so you can notice the influence that your head is having on your pelvis turning.

So you're not actually bending your knee up very much. It just gives a little bit out to the side.

You feel the relationship of your pelvis and your hip joint, and your hip joint to your knee, and your knee to your ankle, how that goes through your back, and how all of that is related to the earth that you're lying upon.

Yes.

Good, and then pause.

Have your forehead rest on your right hand, and have your left hand come to the back of your head, and see if you can find a way of just gently turning your head a little bit by pushing and pulling with your left hand. Just a little bit.

It's not gonna be a big movement. You'll get uncomfortable.

You can let the elbow slide on the floor a little bit, or lift.

And feel that through your spine.

Just seeing — can you let the head be moved by the hand like that? By the arm like that?

And then just change over your hands. Put the left on the ground and the right up, and just a light — it's not gonna be a big movement. That's a challenging movement, but to see, can you let the neck be a little bit passive to the movement of the hand and arm?

That's good.

And then leave that.

Bending toward the knee

Please turn your head to the right, unless that's not doable for you, and let both arms be upward, somewhere comfortable, but not long at your side, if that's okay.

And lift the right side of your pelvis. Let the leg turn. The knee begins to come out to the side a little bit, and then you go back to neutral. And in a number of approximations, let the knee bend out to the side and then stay bent.

But take your time. So you're looking to the right, and we're just bending the right leg.

And then, after four or five movements, you let the knee really bend out to the side and stay there.

So bend it up, kind of in the direction of your right elbow, but some comfortable place you can stay.

With that leg bent out to the side, so it's kind of pointing rightward, pointing in the same direction your nose is pointing.

It doesn't have to be 90 degrees, but it's bent out to the side.

Just take a moment. Let that leg stay bent out to the side, and feel your breath.

Feel down towards the golden ball. Notice if there are any signs of breathing in front of your sacrum, down towards the pelvic floor.

Feel how the lower back and lower belly are related to breath.

And put your right hand so you could put weight on it. Lift your right elbow in the air, and just gently create a movement where you slide your head kind of towards that gap between your hand and your shoulder, as if you want to see your right knee.

You may not see it, you may see it, but you're going in that direction, and then back.

So the right elbow is in the air. You're leaning on the right hand. Find a good place to put the right hand, and then with the support of that hand, you let yourself roll a little bit and slide your head and look under that gap, towards the knee, and then come back a number of times.

Let your whole spine bend like that.

And keep your head some comfortable place, toward that direction, and just light and easy, slide your knee a little bit towards the head and a little bit away, so you're bending like that.

Feel the pressure into the ground of your right hand, and how you need to free yourself somehow from the pull of gravity to be able to slide, yet you don't want to lift more than necessary.

Let yourself breathe and stay light.

That's it.

Feel what comes away from the ground and what rolls towards the ground.

That's it. Good.

And then pause comfortably on your front, whatever that would look like. And if you need to come off your front, because it's challenging, you can do that.

[Silence 31 seconds]

The other side

And please, both legs long, look to the left, and have your arms bent upward.

Just take a moment to sense yourself here.

Take your time. So both legs start long, and you're looking left.

And just take your time. First just rolling your pelvis, letting the left side lift, and then go back, and the arms are just resting on the floor.

And you're just rolling that left side of the pelvis and feeling how that goes through your legs and your spine.

You very gradually begin bending that left leg, but take your time, so these relationships of the joints can be sensed more clearly.

Really letting the movement go through your body. Feel into the ground, even into the space around you, so you're not compressing into the solidity of a body, but you're working through your form into space.

And some of us experienced, in our third week, when we were working with space so much — including the space around your body — really changes the sense of the physical body.

Let the left knee bend out to the side and let it stay bent.

Put your left elbow in the air and just experiment with how you can free yourself enough from the floor to slide your head a little towards the knee.

The knee might also slide a bit towards the head, and mostly you're exploring how to get lighter on the floor, how to let movement go through you on the floor.

That's it.

And then pause with your head kind of under the gap, and let the knee come towards your head. Just kind of pause there for a moment in that bent position, and feel your breath down into your pelvis, to your lower belly.

And then, once again, just get comfortable on your front. Lengthen your legs, or do whatever will work for you. Reorganize your arms.

If you need a few moments off your belly, take them.

[Silence 57 seconds]

Good. Then both your arms, so the elbows are in the air, and you roll your pelvis, lifting the left side. Let the left knee bend out, let the head go towards that gap, and then lengthen, and then go to the right.

See if you can find a way to have both elbows in the air, so you need to find a place for your hands that feels right to you.

If they're too close to your shoulders, it'll feel cumbersome. If they're too far, it'll feel cumbersome.

So feel this, and that the rolling comes from the pelvis and goes through you.

You can feel into the earth through your hands, rolling over the earth, but let it come from your middle, not from your arms pushing predominantly.

Your arms are secondary, and your head finds a way to roll and even go under that gap a little bit. So slide your head a bit towards the knee, and come to the other side.

It's lizardly, lizardly movement.

Can you have an adverb on lizard? Lizardly. I guess you can. Well, we now can.

That's good. Good.

And a little quicker, lighter, softer. Gliding.

What would make it easier? What would make it softer?

Make it smaller if that'll make it softer and lighter. If you can get more glide, more feeling of harmony.

That's good. Okay, leave it.

Rest on your back for a moment.

The chest

And feel how the influence of being on your belly like that — how the breath is shifted, and how the chest, the whole shape of the ribs, gets influenced. And we can welcome that.

Especially when we're in highly charged emotional situations, giving our chests a chance to soften, to yield, to either roll in this kind of way, or sometimes just to rest on a pillow and lie on a pillow, can really help from storing in the body.

That heart brain in the middle of our chest needs the support.

Maybe even take a moment, just resting your hands on your chest. Feel that.

[Silence 2 minutes]

The eyes lead

You've come onto your front once again.

And rest your forehead on your hands.

Feel your eyes hanging forward, also drawn to the earth.

Let your eyes begin to swing up and down a little bit.

Feel how, when the eyes go up, you might sense a kind of creeping sensation down your neck and back.

Usually the eyes looking up are connected to the head lifting, and that lives in our nervous system. Might feel something subtle like that.

And yeah, we're just lifting the eyes, and it's possible you'll feel a kind of creeping sensation down your neck, maybe upper back, as if your body's getting ready to look up. Because that's so familiar when the eyes go up.

And then actually let the eyes lift. Let the head begin to follow. So let yourself look up, and then come back down, but it's connected to the eyes kind of leading. And then you feel how your arms can support the lifting of the head, and how the movement travels down your back, and you feel your pelvis coming to the floor a bit more.

And begin to let your eyes look over a shoulder. So you're not just looking straight up, and feel how that begins to permeate through to your pelvis.

How looking over your left shoulder invites some sort of response through your pelvis. Looking over your right shoulder. Maybe it does, maybe it doesn't. You see.

And as if you're following your eyes — you're looking up, you're getting support from your arms, but you're letting it kind of move through your whole body. As if your body — it's not just your head lifting and the rest of you is just down there.

Your whole body is alive to it. You're looking over your shoulder.

What's your pelvis want to do when you look over your shoulder?

That's to feel how the legs respond to looking over. Do they? Maybe they don't.

But listen to what happens spontaneously when you organize yourself to look over a shoulder.

Okay, and then pause.

[Silence 57 seconds]

Put your hands next to your head somehow, some comfortable place.

Begin with your forehead towards the ground, and as you look over your right shoulder, intentionally let the right knee come out to the side a little bit, and you're pushing off your hands.

Let your elbows be in the air, and as if you wanted to kind of lift your head a bit. You may not actually see over your shoulder, but you're looking in that direction.

And then you come to the other side and let that leg bend.

So what we're looking for is a relationship — that it's not a few separate movements, but that somehow your eyes oriented over your shoulder, pushing off, turning your pelvis, letting the leg bend, looking, that you can somehow lift your head, even if you're not seeing over your shoulder.

You might, but you might not.

You're kind of looking towards that hip that's lifting, you could say. You look over the right shoulder towards the right hip, or something like that.

You see how light you can get. It's not so simple to get lighter in this position.

You know, when you were an infant crawling, you probably were pretty light on the floor, but it's a little bit different now, maybe.

That's it. Let your head really lift. Let your leg really bend.

How can you get — what's the timing?

Part of the timing is to let your back arm — in other words, when you look over the left shoulder, let your right arm also support you, so you're not quite collapsing in one shoulder.

Let that go really through you. That's it.

Go really, so it's one movement through your whole self.

That's great.

Okay, leave it. Pause. Rest on your back.

And again, take a moment to feel the influence on your chest, on your torso. Let your head turn a bit.

Again, maybe rest with your hands on your chest if that feels comfortable for you, just to feel the influence.

Just touching your chest here, letting the feeling of the breath through your hands.

[Silence 58 seconds]

An unusual organization

Come onto your front.

Look to the right.

And roll your pelvis a little right and left. Feel the responsiveness in your legs.

See if somehow that's gotten a little bit freer in your hips and knees, responding to your pelvis.

And then begin to experiment with sliding the left knee out to the side.

Slide it a little bit, lengthen, slide a little more, lengthen. So the left knee is going to bend now, and then you lengthen a bit.

So you take your time to kind of organize your back to accept that unusual organization.

And then let the left knee stay bent out to the side.

You're looking right, your nose is right, your knee is left, and your arms are resting.

You're just going to find your way breathing in this non-habitual position.

Not an uncommon position for kids to sleep in, but rather uncommon for adults.

And put your hands, elbows standing above your hands. Bring your forehead to the floor, and just experiment first, looking under one elbow, and then under the other elbow.

So start — you look under your left, then look under your right. Keep this knee bent.

How can you look under your right arm, with your knee bent like this? So go slow.

You're gonna slide your nose a little bit, like you're letting your upper body bend. That's what we're doing. We're getting the chest to bend in an unusual way.

So you probably can bring your nose a little bit towards your left knee, but then to bring your nose kind of under that right gap is not so easy.

Go slow. So you're not trying to force anything. You're just letting it move through your body.

That's it. Letting your shoulder blades yield. So you can — that's it.

And pause with your head towards the right gap.

And slowly lengthen your left leg and bend your right knee in the direction of your nose, your forehead.

That's it. Then let's pause here for a moment. Let your arms rest.

Your arms just rest for a moment.

Really dropping into the support of the ground, letting your breath, letting your chest and belly —

Even if you have to navigate around some places that are not used to lying like this, feel underneath that. If there's something in you that gets supported and held in your belly, in your chest, your inner feeling.

And place your hands so that the elbows can be in the air, and you can lean on your hands, and find a way to turn your head and look under that left side.

Feel — how can you somehow come in that direction, and then come back to the right?

A number of times.

So it's something about letting your chest bend.

And then as you continue, begin to lift your head higher and look over the shoulder, or with that intention.

You may not actually be able to see over the shoulder, but let the movement go across your shoulder blades. So you're pushing a little more on one side, a little more on the other.

Good.

Feel that lifting, looking, and then change over your legs and continue.

Your eyes seek the world over that shoulder.

Okay, leave it.

Come onto your back, and feel how that influences you.

Sense the breath.

Roll your head a little bit. Feel the quality of movement through.

And pause, and feel the volume of your chest, belly.

Sense of the space around your body.

As you listen to the front of your whole body, notice you can open attention to the space in front of where your physical body is. If there's some kind of vibration, or some kind of sense of the space, away from your skin, or from your skin outward.

Feel in your belly, and sensing it through your back into the earth.

Where the breath moves through, where you can sense it down towards your pelvis.

Fan through your torso.

Standing

And then whirl to your side, come on up to standing, and feel how this lives in you as you come up.

Feel what the relationship is like through all of you, particularly through each of the joints, how they relate to each other, and then as you move through space, what your shape is like, and what kind of calls you.

[Participant:] Feel like Nevada just moved through me.

[Russell:] Nevada just moved through you.

What's that feel like?

[Participant:] Oh, just that way of holding on to travel and seeing it.

[Russell:] Just letting it, yeah, emptying that out, yeah.

[Participant:] They heard it say Nirvana.

[Russell:] Nirvana moved through, yeah.

It's what the folks in Las Vegas want you to think.

Feel what that's like. Move, walk a little bit, feel how your torso moves.

Connect your pelvis and your head in that way, through your chest.

Just stand for a moment. Feel yourself stand.

Feel where the breath goes.

And how is that for your sacrum? 'Cause you're standing quite differently right now. Thinking that might be a good one for what's happening in your sacrum.

Let's gather around. Let's hear from some more folks.